

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of this patent application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 45-49, 52-54, 56-58, 60-62, 65-69, 72-74, 76-78, 80, 81, 83, 86-87, and 89-92 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Berger GB 2 016 984 in view of Schach et al. WO 2004/028702 A1, and U.S. Application Publication No. 2006/0124762.

Claims 44, 64 & 82 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Berger in view of Schach et al. as applied to claims 45-49, 52-54, 56-58, 60-62, 65-69, 72-74, 76-78, 80, 81, 83, 86-87, and 89-92 above, and further in view of Sugiyama GB 2 174 942.

It is respectfully submitted that the present invention as claimed in independent claims 61 and 81 as amended are different and patentable over the above cited references taken either singularly or in combination.

For example claim 81 has been amended to state:

(b) a plurality of transport elements which are successively and displaceably mounted inside of said guide path of said guiding element, wherein at least one transport element is formed as a ball;
(c) a base body; and
(d) a drive sleeve connected with at least one transport element of each guiding element, wherein said drive sleeve has an internal thread adapted to the contour of said plurality of transport elements, and engaged by at least one transport element of said plurality of transport elements;

These features are not shown in the above cited references taken either singularly or in combination.

Furthermore, claim 61 has also been amended as follows:

wherein said at least one transport element is shaped as a ball;...

wherein the drive mechanism has a drive sleeve that is formed with an internal thread adapted to the contour of said transport elements and engaged by at least one transport element.

These features are also not shown in the above cited references taken either singularly or in combination.

Support for these amendments can be found in claims 46 and 66 and also in claims 58 and 78. Further support is found in the specification, in paragraphs 81 and 128 of the published application and also in FIG. 43.

With these designs as claimed in claims 61 and 81, the welding wire (13) will be transported by rotating the drive sleeve (43) whereby the transport elements (33) are moved in a circulating manner within the guide path (32) provided in the elements (28).

Since at least one guiding element (28) is displaceably arranged, an adaptation to the diameter of the welding wire (13) is possible.

The above cited references only show transport elements in a disc shape such as that shown by reference numeral 2 in GB'984, or US2006/0124762 to Schach et al (see ref. no 8). It is respectfully submitted that this design would not be sufficient to guide a wire if the guide sleeve is rotated.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the present invention as claimed in claims 61 and 81 are patentable over the above cited references taken either singularly or in combination.

The remaining dependent claims depend from either claim 61 or claim 81. Therefore, early allowance of the remaining claims is respectfully requested.

New claims 93 and 94 have been added. Support can be found in claims 61 and 81 respectively, as well as in claims 90 and 92 which are now canceled. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge Collard & Roe, P.C.'s deposit account 03-2468 for the amount necessary for the additional claims and any other required fee.

Respectfully submitted,
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